

CALUMNY REPELLED,

AND

FALSHOOD DETECTED;

BEING

An ANSWER to a Pamphlet,

INTITLED,

Seceding Presbyterianism Delineated;

IN A

L E T T E R

To the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN POTTS, at Kelso.

By WILLIAM HUTTON, A. M. Minister of
the Gospel at DALKEITH.

Prov. xxvi. 5. *Answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be wise
in his own conceit.*

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A

LETTER

To the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN POTTS, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

I Have read and considered your late performance, fronted with the title of *Seceding Presbyterianism Delineated*, which seems to be a production of the most singular nature that ever came in my way, and does so little honour to you, its author, in the opinion of the sober and thinking part of mankind, that I began to drop my design of offering an answer to it, esteeming it below my notice, and unworthy of my time, till some informed me, from different quarters, that the cause which we espouse is, by your essay, depreciated, and suffering contempt with severals, who have greedily embraced the occasion your book has presented to revile the *seceding interest*; and also, to throw the foulest calumny upon the ministers of the *association*, as a society of immoral men, who ought to be carefully avoided. Reports of this nature have dragged me to address you by the press, undertaking the low office of an answer to your pitiful book. Though the office be not honourable, to contend with an adversary that fights not with the approved armour of scripture and reason, but the detested weapons of slander and falsehood; yet the laws of self-preservation, and the credit of religion, will sufficiently justify an attempt to wrest such pernicious ar-

mour

mour out of his hands, that, for the time to come, he may be less qualified to wound the characters of others. If, by this essay, I shall compass such a valuable end, and detect the fraud and falsehood, with which your pamphlet is stuffed; if likeways, I shall undeceive these who are fond to believe you, at our expence, and put you to the blush for your invidious detraction, which is unworthy of a *Christian*, and highly injurious to the character of a minister, I shall gain my end. Such a mortification you richly deserve, if it shall teach you to use your pen with more caution, and learn you to write in a stile that is worthy of a *Christian*, my present drudgery will be amply rewarded.

It is not my intention to trouble you with reflexions upon the dedication: How far the honourable gentleman, whose name is prefixed to your book, thinks himself honoured by it, you may easily judge, by the following missive, directed to me.

Reverend Sir,

In case you, and the presbytery you belong to, should think that I had some hand in, or, at least, gave some countenance to the publishing a pamphlet, called, *Seceding Presbyterianism Delineated*, by Mr. John Potts, because of my name being at the head of it; I take this opportunity to let you know that, till I saw it in print, I had not the smallest hint of his design this way; and that I think it the vilest, and most scurrilous piece that ever blacked paper; and (as I have good reason to believe) base misrepresentation of matters of fact.

If this is published with the answer, which, I hear, is intended to be given to this singular performance, it will oblige,

Sir,

Stitchell, June 25. Your most humble servant,
1753. Robert Pringle.

It is natural for men, when guilty of blunders, to offer some apology for their conduct, to mitigate the censures of others ; I am not therefore surprized to find you excusing your joining the *Seceders* by the immaturity of your age, when you did take that important step, *introduction, page 5.* If this was a false step, your age, at that time, may do much to screen you from censure ; but what shall be pled in your favours, for embarking more closely than ever with them, when you were ordained to the holy ministry, and came under the most solemn ties to prosecute the *seceding interest?* Your age then will not serve to make your readers think that you acted either wisely or candidly in that matter.

In the same page, you date your disaffection to the *Seceders*, from your first tour to *London*, as a missionary from the *associate synd.* This, perhaps, is very just; but the reasons you offer for this change of your mind, and the scruples you conceived against our way, are not conclusive, *viz.* the *unchristian behaviour of our people at London towards the Dissenters there, whom they call Sectarians ; their disloyal principles, and their rude carriage toward yourself.* I believe, Sir, that our people at *London* could not injure the most of the *Dissenters* in *London*, by calling them *Sectarians*, though I pretend not to affirm that they are all in the *Sectarian* way. To charge the *Seceders* at *London* with disloyal principles is wicked, seeing we refuse all to be *Seceders* who are not subject to the present government for conscience sake. Perhaps you call them (and all of us) disloyal, because we have not, for some years, observed any fests appointed by the government. Our reasons for this conduct are no secret in the world ; but none that know our history can impute this behaviour to disloyal principles. If these people were rude in their behaviour towards you, this could be no just reason for a change of your principles, unless the scandalous lives of the most

of Christians, be a sufficient reason for renouncing the Christian faith. If their behaviour towards you was rude, you suffer by fame, if your conduct towards them was mannerly : But *two blacks will not make a white.*

An instance of their rudeness towards you, is contained, *introduction, page 6.* where you insinuate, *That these people endeavoured to lock and keep you out of Bow-Lane meeting, upon a national fast, and afterwards appointed one of their own, which they advertised in the London papers, a copy whereof you have thought proper to publish.* This, I confess, is all new to me, who never formerly heard of it ; but I cannot fail to observe, that their conduct in locking their meeting was more consilient than yours, in offering to preach on that day ; at least, they had better reason to be offended with you, than you with them. Your account of that fast, appointed by our people, is full of inconsistencies : Your history bears, that they (*viz.* our people at *London*) appointed this fast ; the *London Advertiser* signifies, that it was appointed by the *associate synod of Edinburgh.* From the same paper it appears, that this fast was intimated in *Bow-Lane meeting*, to be observed there *February 22. 1749.* How then came you to forget, that you never preached in *Bow-Lane meeting* since *May 1747* ? From that time you never had any concern with the people in *Bow-Lane meeting*, who, after your return to *Scotland*, in *May* or *June* that year, entred into a connection with our separating brethren. If therefore this fast was observed by people with whom you had no connection, how came you to apprehend, that you were embarked with *pyrates*, instead of faithful subjects, when you were not embarked with them at all ? When you shall make these glaring falsehoods consistent with truth, and reconcile these gross contradictions, *the Ethiopian shall also change his hue, and the leopard his spots.* In the mean time, it is pitiful calumny to call these people *pyrates*, which is, at best,

to lay things to their charge they know not. You might have spared such an impudent calumny till they had be taken themselves to a sea-faring life; in their present way, the riches of the sea are not like to be spoiled by them: But if you call all the *Seceders*, whether high or low, (as they are comonly denominated) *pyrates*, and not faithful subjects, Why did you not then forsake their company? With what conscience, or common honesty, could you afterwards engage to support the cause of *pyrates*, whom also you load with the vile infamy of being no friends to *Cesar*? No man living can answer these questions for you; if your own fruitful fancy can invent an answer to your honour, you may pass for the *Solomon of the present age*.

It is not strange, that you should go on in your busines of slander, and tell the world, *That you cannot help thinking our friends in London to be a new set of upstart Pharisees, introduction, page 7.* Something must be said to support this odious character, and therefore you tell us, *That the Pharisees appeared to men to fast, and sounded a trumpet before them.* The *Seceders* in *London* are of the same complexion with these in *Scotland*; if they be *Pharisees*, we at home deserve to be accounted *Pharisees* also. You are much to blame for slandering the *Pharisees*, bad as they were; if you consult their history in the 6th of *Matthew*, they only sounded a trumpet before them when they did their alms; though they were very faulty in fasting, by disfiguring their faces, and appearing to men to fast, yet the use of trumpets in that exercise was no part of their crime. Pray, Sir, permit me to advise you not to slander others for our sake. I wish, however, you had better examined the hypocrisy of the *Pharisees* in fasting, before you had the boldnes to charge us with their sin. Our Lord, in he fore-cited chapter, inveighed against the openness of the *Pharisees* in the duty of private fasting, which work

work ought to have been confined to their closets, and remained a secret between God and them. That the disciples might the better conceal their private fastings, they are directed not to disfigure their faces like the hypocritical *Pharisees*, but to anoint their heads, and wash their faces, that they might not appear to men to fast, but to their Father who seeth in secret, who would not fail to reward them openly. But what is all this to the purpose, in the busines of publick fasting? If personal fasting ought to be secretly managed, and cannot, without *pharisaical* hypocrisy, be propaled in the street, does it follow, that we must make a secret of publick fasting also? Can you be ignorant, that such a secrecy would destroy the nature of the duty, and necessarily make it forfeit the name of a publick fast? Whether this slander of *pharisaical* hypocrisy, in the matter of fasting, flow from ignorance or malice, you can best judge; but it will not, in the least, fright us from sounding a trumpet before us, and from setting it to our mouths also, when we publickly fast. If you have the hardines to censure this conduct, you must also dispute the equity of the Almighty's instructions, and remonstrate against the bible itself; because, in your view, it obliges us to be *Pharisees* when we perform some of the duties required in it. *Joel* ii. 15, 16, 17. *Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, &c.* *Isa. lviii. 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins.* When you consider these scriptures with care, you must be convinced, that the calling us *Pharisees*, in the matter of publick fasting, draws exceeding deep, seeing you thereby make the Almighty the patron of our iniquity. In the mean time, it is surprising, that, after this odious charge produced against us, you should have the confidence to publith to the world your closet-religion, and tell your readers, in your

printed

printed letter, that you have often tried the means of prayer and tears alone for the healing of our differences. If you can reconcile this openness with *Christian* modesty, or screen it from the censure of *pharisaical* ostentation, you may be justly esteemed the most wonderful person of the present age.

I find nothing in your *introduction* worthy of my notice, besides your account of the occasion of the rupture betwixt you and Messrs. *Smith* and *Brown* with the elders of *Jedburgh*, immediately before the sacramental solemnity in that place, *June 19. 1752*. As I was not fully acquainted with the whole of that history, the Reverend Mr. *Smith* has eased me of the burden of an answer to it, in the following letter, directed to me.

R. D. B.

‘ In the following narratives I do not so much comply with my own judgment, as your desire, in having a genuine account of what the Reverend Mr. *Potts*, in that scurrilous pamphlet lately printed by him, makes such a noise about, considering that I am hereby necessarily led to notice things which are very mean and trifling in my view, and more so in that of others: However, for the vindication of truth, and, in compliance with your desire, I shall, for once, risk the censure of the publick.

‘ Mr. *Potts* having been invited by me to assist at the celebration of the Lord’s supper, upon the 14th of *June 1752* years, came and preached the last diet of the forenoon upon the humiliation-day, being *Wednesday*, as one of the turns assigned him; and after publick worship was over, the session conveened, as usual, to distribute tokens; which being done, some of the members hinted, that, in the interval of worship, they were informed, by some of his ordinary hearers, that he had, last Lord’s day, publickly intimated to his congregation, that he was for a mixt admission of professors

to the Lord's supper, as was used by some of the *Dissenters* in *England*, which, were it so, had offended many in this congregation; and themselves also knowing that some of the *Dissenters* made little or no difference as to *Christians* of any denomination, nor yet the manner of life they live. Whereupon the members of session agreed to enquire at himself as to the truth of the above report; but he was gone off for *Kelso* before this could be done. They concluded, that their next course should be to write him, *quam primum*, by an express, which five of them did upon *Thursday* morning, in the name of the rest, with which the Reverend Mr *Brown* and I concurred: This letter he hath printed in the 9 and 10. pages of his *introduction*. To which, by the bearer, he sent me a verbal return; viz. 'That his intimation was misrepresented, and misconstrued; and, if he did not come, he would write me in due time.' And so much was I under the influence of that easy credulity he speaks of, in page 13. of his *introduction*, that, upon *Friday* morning early, I wrote him pressingly to come and preach the diets allotted him, as the bearer of the yesterday's told me, (according to his order) that the intimation was not as we had heard, but misrepresented, and misconstrued. This, I think, is the substance of what I wrote him, and so I rested satisfied he would come, according to repeated intreaties; till *Saturday*, at two of the morning, when his to the elders in this congregation, inclosed in one to me, was put into my hand by an unseasonable express, which he hath printed in pages 10, &c. of his *introduction*, after he hath corrected no fewer than forty and three blunders, when I compared it with the original; but, as they are mostly grammatical, and what abler hands than either he or I have been guilty of, I shall pass them without any farther notice for the present. At which time of night it was not in my power

power to conveen the persons it concerned, but by eight of the clock, such of them as were in the town, wrote him to come up, in a very earnest manner, as his intimation, according to his own representation of it, varied from the report they got from some of his own hearers, and that they might have access to converse with him more fully, for removing that offence they had taken: And, as for their desiring him to declare his mind about his terms of admission, they told him, That they had no intention to dictate to him, or any of the Lord's ministers, to preach about publick disputes any time, far less at sacramental occasions; but, as he was reproached, they thought this the properest way to clear himself, for the edification of that part of the body they had an immediate concern with, and his own usefulness to them and others, in giving his assistance at the sacrament. To this an answer was received on the Saturday, when late, as he in part hints at in the *introduction*, p. 13.

From the above, when considered, it would appear, that he had as little design to assist here on the foresaid occasion, in a way of having means used to remove what offence was taken, not to say given, as with you on the like occasion two weeks before, from which he absented himself, and for what reason, he knows best; otherways, why was he so long in sending his answer to the first letter he received upon *Thursday* by three of the clock, if not before? Nor had any of us the smallest intention to exclude him communion, as he insinuates in his to the moderator, p. 14. of his *introduction*; and the reason why he was wrote to, as in the second from the elders, that they might have access to converse with him, was, that they knew his intimation was capable to undergo a twofold interpretation, one of which they never intended to dispute, the other they looked upon as everlving of scriptural principles about church-

church-communion, and which of these he intended, they thought a few minutes conversation would clear.

The following part of this letter I have reserved for its own place. It is necessary I now consider the protest which you have printed against us. I am sorry that you studied common form so little in it: Common form required that you should have acted like a *Presbyterian*, by presenting it at the bar of the presbytery, as a proper testimony against us. No less was necessary for your own exoneration. Your culpable neglect of this duty must render your cause suspected. Had it been good, one would think you could not have wanted sufficient boldness to have taken that step, to which your connection with the presbytery bound you. This omission is a glaring instance of your cowardice, and tempts me to think you were afraid to look us in the face, though ye have tried to seduce your readers into an unjust belief that your b—n durst not enter the lists with you: It is possible you have flattered your vanity with a notion of that kind, but you may henceforth lay it aside, when I tell you, That your b—n never esteemed you a formidable adversary.

Had your protest in itself been just, had the reasons of it been weighty and fairly stated, the infirmity of it would be the less exceptionable: But I hope it shall appear, by the following part of this paper, that the reasons of it are without foundation; that the facts which are blended with them, are either false, or unfairly told, whereby you shew yourself void of that *Christian* candour, which must be the study of every one that has a greater concern for truth than his own credit.

It is extremely astonishing to find you declarin your abhorrence of faction and division, as most pernicious to any well regulated society. If we may judge of a tree by its fruit, who can believe you, hatred of divisive courses? Had you cultivated harmony with your b—n, had you not broke through

all the ties you were under, to follow no divisive measures, your pretended love of unity should not have been called in question by us; but the schismatical measures you have lately pursued, without ever signifying to one of us, that your conscience was distressed with the scheme we were studying to promote, may serve to convince all who know your history, that you wanted to break with us; and likeways, that faction, and not unity has been your favourite study.

What is still more impudent, is your pretending to imitate *Christ* in meekness before the *Roman* judge, who answered never a word; as also that ye would not bring a railing accusation against these who had been guilty of fending forth the torrent of malice, guile, hypocrisies, and evil speakings to your prejudice: In place of meekness, malice, instead of a soft answer, nothing but a railing accusation, appear so glaringly through the most of your book, that a railing *Rabbi*, and not the meek and lowly *Jesus*, seems to be the pattern after which you have copied in the writing of it.

The preamble of your protest, and the reasons of it are of a piece, neither of the two can do honour to their author: Your first reason of protest against the presbytery of Edinburgh is unjust, *viz.* our raising a clamour and noise, as if you had espoused new and unlawful principles since your ordination. It is true, Sir, that we have accused you of a change of principles about communion, since the time you were set apart to the holy ministry, neither are we guilty of calumny in bringing that charge against you, if you remember that you vowed to be uniform with, and to follow no divisive and separating courses from us. Our practice about terms of communion was no secret to you when you were ordained. Your pretended ignorance of our scheme of admission to sealing ordinances, which every *Scholar* of sixteen years of age does understand, after you have been so long amongst us, is an example of

of such dissimulation, as may fill every intelligent person who reads your book, with astonishment at your confidence, in publishing what is not capable of belief. But, say you, did we not know, that five years ago, when you were first sent a missionary to London, that you habitually joined with other churches than these of the secession? I knew, Sir, that you had heard some of the dissenting ministers in London, in an occasional way, which I imputed to a principle of curiosity, but that you habitually joined with them, I never knew, till you informed me by your book: Had it been known that this had been your constant practice, these ministers whom you accuse of silence, had been as open and faithful with you as Mr. Gib, whose plainness you so much applaud. You have no reason therefore to complain, that you were deceived by us in this matter. Before I have finished this essay, you may find it proven, beyond contradiction, that you have deceived us very grossly. I find that you attack our moral characters, by insinuating, *That we concurred with other members of the synod, to the mutilating of a minute concerning you, of which you pretend you are informed by a gentleman of undoubted veracity and credit at Edinburgh.* This groundless calumny obliges me to refresh your memory with the whole history of that minute of the synod, which met in October 1750.

When you then appeared at the bar of the synod, after members had endeavoured, by a course of long reasoning, to convince you of the sinfulness of your loose and vague way of hearing at London, the minute concerning that behaviour, which you have thought proper to publish, was drawn up on a piece of loose paper, which, although it contains the substance of your scrimp acknowledgement, yet nothing of the synod's censure of you, for joining with the *Sectarians* at London, is narrated in it. You should have told the world, that the synod rebuked you for your pernicious hearing at London; as likeways, that the moderator told you

you from the chair, That the members of synod were particularly offended with the scrimpness of your acknowledgment with reference to your offence. That the minute of the synod was mutilated, is a gross falsehood; if you will trouble yourself with seeking a sight of that minute, you will find that it does your acknowledgment the greatest justice; but it contains the facts which were not for your honour to publish. May I not, therefore, ask you, With what kind of conscience could you, after this censure, tell the world, That you hoped your brethren were of the same mind with yourself about church-communion? What candour was there in making your late conduct at *London* the standard of the intimation at *Kelso*, when you submitted to censure for it? How could you, with common honesty, or a good conscience, submit to such a censure, if it was wrong? If it was right, and your behaviour at *London* culpable, why did you not act accordingly? But the whole of your practice in this matter is a continued scene of dissimulation, that is not only scandalous in a minister of the gospel, but unworthy of one that bears the *Christian name*.

I must confess, that, in my opinion, the synod dealt too gently with you, for which, I am afraid, they are too justly chastised, by your perfidious apostacy from the Lord's cause, and the most aggravated violation of your ordination-vows; yet it may be said, in their vindication, that they thought, when you were come to *Scotland*, you were out of the way of these temptations, which beset you in that city; they did not then dream that you could dissemble to serve your purpose, and therefore concluded, that, as you were under a call to *Stitchell*, so, if you had freedom to submit to our ordination-vows, you would find yourself obliged, in conscience, to be harmonius with us, in promoting that cause which you have since so basely deserted.

You talk very highly of your endeavours to cultivate harmony with us, by your long journey from *London*

you London to Stirling, to obey a citation sent from the synod, page 6. Had you been careful since to preserve unity and harmony with us, your obedience to that citation had been the more laudable; you add, *That this journey exposed your family to mortal and manifest danger, as your spouse attended you in the ninth month of her pregnancy.* This, Sir, was your fault; had you obeyed some former citation's sent you, this danger to your family might have been easily avoided; had you then wrote the situation of your family, the synod would have cheerfully excused your absence; but who can excuse the violence you have done to your conscience, by conceding that it was even inexpedient to hear persons of other denominations at London? Every thing that offers violence to the light of the conscience, is a presumptuous sin. I wish you may apply to a proper quarter for repentance and the remission of it. I cannot forbear to tell you, *That you have added to this presumptuous guilt, by submitting to a synodical rebuke; which necessarily supposed (what you were not convinced of) the sinfulness of your conduct.* Had you then acted like one that studies to be a candid confessor of the truth, you had plainly told the synod, *that your conduct merited no censure, and you could submit to none, but at the expence of truth and a good conscience;* had you thus acted like a man of common integrity, our connections with you had then been at an end, which happy event at that time would have no less conduced to your honour than our advantage.

Your reasons of protest must be very lame, when you make the presbtery's delay of your ordination for the space of some months, after your trials were expedited, one of them page 7th, while you confess that this delay was owing to a jealousy of your being not so contracted in your judgment, about terms of communion, as the presbtery were, in which you confess we were not deceived. Our just jealousy of your widenss

wideness, in terms of communion, cuts the sinews of this reason of protestation, we are bound, by the divine law, to lay hands suddenly upon no man; and therefore must study to try every man, before we commit the valuable trust of the ministry unto him. We cannot therefore be justly blamed for delaying your ordination, till we obtained a conversation with you, that we might learn whether our jealousy was well or ill founded. This conversation at length was obtained at *Jedburgh*, in *July 1751*. You complain, *That we did not drive the nail to the head, at, or before, your ordination, by neglecting this plain question, 'Whether or not are you resolved, through grace, to confine yourself, in point of church-communion, to us the ministers and members of the secession, exclusive of all the ministers and members of the church of Scotland, or other churches of Christ?'* Then (say you) you would have told us, with English openness, and with the candour of a Christian, that you were determined *not to do it*. This question, I confess, we did not ask you; nor did we intend to propose any question of that kind. But you may remember, that, in the private conversation with you at *Jedburgh*, we asked questions to the following purpose: *If you owned the binding obligation of our covenants upon the present age? If you could approve of the testimony in its true scope and design, as a testimony against the backslidings from our covenanted principles? If you were resolved to be uniform with us in the prosecuting of this testimony? If also you could approve of our questions proposed to ministers at their ordination, in the common acceptation of the words?* These questions were plainly founded upon a jealousy of you, all which, to our great satisfaction, you answered in the affirmative. But your behaviour since that time may convince the world, that the candour of a Christian was far from your heart, when these answers did drop from your lips. This was openness sufficient to make you appear in your own likeness, had not English

lifb openness departed from you, and had not you covered yourself with the cloak of dissimulation to impose upon us, who had the charity to believe you were an honest man, and that you had told us all your heart. But we did not yet know that we had an eel by the tail; neither need you complain, that, at your ordination, we did not query you explicitely about terms of communion. All the questions were put to you that were ever proposed to other intrants into the ministry, which form of questions was formed by the associate presbytery after its first erection, before they proceeded to the ordination of any ministers. From this form of questions we never saw cause to depart; neither was it in our power, as a presbytery, to do it, unless we had laid ourselves open to the imputation of novelty, and the grievous charge of following divisive courses, for which we would necessarily expose ourselves to the censure of the synod, to which we are subject. What reason then, Sir, had you to complain, that we dealt no openly with you? Have we not more reason to aver, that, on your side, openness was wanting? I must here remind you, that you had been at least nine years by this time amongst the seceders, and witnessed all that time their way of admitting people to the Lord's tabl; besides the little time you were absent from us, by your going twice as a missionary to London: What purpose then can your pretended ignorance of our way of admitting people to the seals of the covenant serve, but only to increase the number of falsehoods with which your pamphlet is stuffed? How could you, after all, engage, when ordained, before God, and a numerous assembly of people, to follow no divisive courses from us? If you were convinced our way was wrong, with what candour or integrity could you vow to keep it? If it was right, with what kind of conscience have you deserted it, at the expence of solemn vows?

Your

Your next reason of protesting against us, is as trifling as the former ; viz. *Our offence at the news we received of your publick commendation of Mr. Whitefield, in one of your sermons at Stitchell, some little time after your ordination, which we signified to you by a letter from the reverend Mr. Brown, p. 9.* And you complain, that we clandestinely censured you for the same, at a meeting of the presbytery, from which you were absent. I may afterwards offer my sentiments about that person who has made such a noise in the world. In the mean time, Christ, and him crucified, had been a better theme for a pulpit, than the publick applause of that gentleman. But it is a falsehood that we censured you at all for that step. When this report came to our ears, at a meeting of the presbytery, we signified to one another privately both our surprize and offence at your conduct, and desired Mr. more to signify so much to you, that you might be *Brown* cautious for the time to come, and not tread in the path of novelty. What less could we do to you as a brother ? Are we not bound to watch over and exhort one another daily ? But you complain, that when you appeared at the presbytery, none of us had the confidence to bring it above board unto you. Indeed, Sir, we had no design to pannel you before the presbytery for that unguarded step, but we purposed to converse with you freely before we parted with you, had you not prevented this freedom, by stealing away in a clandestine manner, without the mannerly ceremony of a discreet farewell. Wherefore these odious characters, *whisperers, backbiters, Rom i. 30.* cannot be justly applied to us in the present question, who faithfully communicated our offence by a missive from a brother to you, and may with more justice be applied to yourself, who slander us as guilty of censuring you clandestinely, when no such censure was ever intended by us. The calmest construction that such

a behaviour is capable of, is, that herein you have not acted like a citizen of Zion, who taketh not up a false report against his neighbour. Neither was this freedom by our brother's missive a transgression of the golden rule, Matth. xviii. If thy brother trespass against thee, tell him his fault between thee and him, &c. seeing you could not be told of your fault more secretly than by a private missive, when we had not access to converse personally with you: But it is very surprising, that one in your office should display so much ignorance of the nature of this excellent rule, which has only a respect to private offences, but blunders in a pulpit before a numerous auditory cannot be class'd amongst private offences, if there be any such thing as open offence amongst men. After all, how could you mention this golden rule with your lips, who have publickly accused your brethren of secret abominations, while you never told them secretly that you were offended with any part of their way? The best apology that can be made for you is, *The legs of the lame are not equal and the unjust knoweth no shame.*

What can be more absurd than your protesting *against such members of this presbytery, or any other persons that were any way accessory to your being precluded the liberty of communicating at the sacrament of Jeddburgh* page 10. When Mr. Smith's account of that matter is impartially survey'd, it is self-evident, that none were so much to blame for this as yourself. Had you been very willing to communicate there, we had never heard of this part of your complaint. Your title to officiate as a minister depended upon the pleasure of Mr. Smith, who, as *episcopus loci*, might employ what ministers he pleased; but neither he nor we could preclude you the liberty of communicating, till a formal process was commenced against you. But you add, *That you were shuffl'd out of our communion at all other sacramental occasions within the bounds of the presbytery*

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presbytery, and so treated as a heathen man and publican. But who ever dreamed till now, that a minister, when he does not invite all his co-presbyters to assist him at his sacramental solemnity, treats them as heathen men and publicans? According to this way of reasoning, the excommunications in *Scotland* are endless. You cannot, after all, be surprised, that you received no invitation to assist at the sacraments of *Linton* and *Haddington*, seeing, by this time, you were begun to rail at our covenants and testimony, building again the things which you once destroyed, making yourself a transgressor. Our brethren, concerned in these places, were unwilling to encourage or harden you in your begun defection; nor did they incline, by an invitation, to make themselves partners in your guilt. Who then can blame them for declining your company, which could not be purchased but at the expence of innocence itself?

I am not much surprized, that, after the above trifling reasons of protest, the conduct of the presberty met at *Linton*, August 11th 1752. should be an additional reason of it. The Reverend Mr. *Brown*, whose letter you say you have published, and who is better acquainted with that affair than I can pretend, does answser this reason for me, which is here subjoined in a missive directed to me.

R. D. B.

As to my letter, of the date *November 21st 1751*. had our author paid a due regard to candour and ingenuity, he would have told the world, that in that missive, I, at the extrajudicial advice of several brethren of our presberty, had signified to him, that we were much offended with his habitual absenting from judicatories, and could not forbear coming to a reckoning with him, if he continued in that course; and, as a private brother, afraid of suffering

‘ suffering sin to ly on his head, had therein plainly
‘ evinced, that this conduct of his was a manifest
‘ breach of his ordination vows, destructive of all
‘ order, and introductory of all confusion in the house
‘ of God; and moreover, that nothing tending to
‘ beget offence might be practised among us, I hinted,
‘ that we were dissatisfied to hear of his commanding
‘ Mr. *Whitefield*, from the pulpit, as a great refor-
‘ mer. — That, having received this missive,
‘ whatever indignation was kindled in his breast a-
‘ gainst the writer, on account of his plainness, he
‘ took pretty good care to deprive his brethren of
‘ conversation with him upon any point whatsoever,
‘ by absenting from the next meeting of presbytery;
‘ and, when coming into the company of his brethren
‘ June 2d and 10th 1752. by slipping in, and flink-
‘ ing off with himself, in such a way, as left no oppor-
‘ tunity of conference on these points; and, by shift-
‘ ing conversation with them in his own house, June
‘ 16th that year, till he was on the matter dragged
‘ into it. Had he published this narrative, he would
‘ have obliged the world with truth, tho’ I dare not
‘ say he would have advanced the credit of his present
‘ course, but would rather have informed the gene-
‘ ration, that he, like one conscious of his crimes,
‘ had been forced to betake himself to the most piti-
‘ ful shifts.

‘ As to the missive, of the date *August 19th 1752.*
‘ the plain matter of fact is, that the presbytery,
‘ which met on the 11th of that month, having con-
‘ sidered several steps of Mr. *Potts* his conduct
‘ betwixt his ordination and that time; — and that
‘ tho’, in a most friendly way, he had been twice
‘ desired and intreated to attend that presbytery,
‘ (*viz.* once at *Kelso*, June 16th, three ministers and
‘ one elder being present, and once afterwards at
‘ *Jedburgh* by one minister) and for his encourage-
‘ ment and excitement thereto, had ground given
him

him to hope, that, by this means, a conference with his brethren might happily remedy all misunderstandings betwixt him and them, unless himself should stand as a bar in the way thereof; yet he had not only disregarded both these entreaties, but scoffed at the letter when given him; therefore they appointed me, as their clerk, to write him a missive, in the most express manner, calling him to attend their next meeting, that they might deal with him concerning his conduct, whereupon I wrote him a missive to that effect, but utterly refuse that what he hath published is a genuine copy thereof, and crave that the world may look on it as falsified, till he shall have the courage and candour to present, at any of our meetings, in presence of my brethren and me, with as many besides as he sees meet, the original copy similar to what is published, which I hereby challenge him to do. Had not I observed that our author had glaringly falsified his own letter, of the date *December 18. 1752.* perhaps I might have been displeased with his treatment of mine; but plainly, I can neither expect nor desire justice from him to one whom he states the particular mark of his resentment, when, it seems, he has not enough to bellow on himself: However, not chusing to answer him according to his folly, I remit him to these scriptures, *1sa. xxxvi. 20. and 2 Sam. xvi. 11.* where he may find all the disparaging squibs he throws out against me compleatly answered. I am,
Haddington, August 3. R. D B. Yours, &c.

1753.

JOHN BROWN.

I cannot pass over this subject, without observing the particular spleen you display against that brother. I know not any offence he ever gave you to provoke our resentment against him, besides his faithfulness reproving you, by some missives, for some of your regular steps. Such smiting was in itself a favour, and

and not an injury ; you had acted more like a Christian, if this brotherly freedom had been accounted a precious oil, and esteemed a kindness ; but you have followed a worse example, in treating the reprobate with contempt, and dealing with him as an enemy, because he has told you the truth. But this is not a novelty in the earth, for *he that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame*. I cannot believe the bad spelling of this brother's letter to be genuine, seeing I can produce several letters which he has sent me that give sufficient documents of his skill in orthography, and which I am ready to produce to any who will call this in question. To lessen his character before the world, you signify, page 13th, *That he has mistaken his trade* ; adding, in a most ludicrous manner, *That there are many who run their heads against a pulpit, who might have done their country very good service at a plough-tail which you think is nigh parallel in the case of that brother*, whom, in your jeering style, you call *Mij John*. This scoffing character of a minister of the gospel, whom you ought to esteem for his work sake, is more injurious to yourself than him, whom you endeavour to expose to ridicule, and effectually betrays the spleen that is boiling in your breast against him. Slanderers, as well as liars, I find, have need of good memories. The infamy you have cast upon this brother's name, has hurt you much in the esteem of some of your good old friends in *Dalkeith*, whose presence you compared him to no less a man than *doctor Gill*, whom you heard at *London*, and whose abilities in learning, and particularly in divinity, are, by this time, no secret in *Britain*. Whether you were right in this comparison I know not, but it is certain, that then you seemed to speak the language of your heart ; but now, when provoked, the language of malice must drop from your pen. As our brother is alive, I chuse to be modest in expressing my sentiments about him ; but seeing you have introduced

duced him, as unfit to appear in a pulpit, and as a scandal to the ministry for insufficiency, I owe him the justice of telling you, That, in all the parts of learning necessary to adorn the pulpit, he is your superior, and, in divinity, he is capable to be your teacher. Though I design not hereby to deny, or detract from the gifts which the Lord hath bestowed upon you, nor do I think that the presbytery have any reason to be ashamed of approving your trials, as tests of your fitness for the holy ministry; yet it is certain, that you never gave such documents of your insight into divinity, as that brother did, when you were both under trials before them. If you have the confidence to call this in question, I shall leave you in the peaceable possession of your self-conceit: But who can behold you reviling our brother for the meanness of his former employment, without comparing you to the venomous fly, that feeds upon the sores of others? Perhaps you have made yourself very merry with this pitiful scoff, yet every sober Christian must commiserate the rancour of your heart, and the invidious turn of your mind. If our brother fulfil his present office faithfully, the meanness of his former business will not hurt his character in the eye of sober and thinking men. It is no blemish upon the Apostles, that some of them were originally fishers; neither was the splendor of David's crown obscured by the shepherd's crook, after the royal sceptre was put into his hand.

Your next reason of protest is the conduct of the members of presbytery, when they had a *pro re nata* meeting at Jedburgh in November last. This reason, as you have formed it, appears exceeding strong. As I was not present at that meeting, the Reverend Mr. Smith answers it for me, in the remaining part of his letter, which verifies the scripture proverb, *He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh after him, and findeth him out.*

‘ As to what past at Jedburgh in November last, when the presbytery *pro re nata* conveened (which he represents in a very odd light, and scarcely deserves notice, knowing that *obtrectatio est stultorum thesaurus, quem in linguis gerunt*) an exact account follows, so far as I can now remember, and serves to cast light on the present affair. The time of meeting, according to appointment, was *Wednesday* the 22d of said month, Mr. *Potts* came to my house, about 12 of the clock upon the *Tuesday*, where he found the Reverend Mr. *James Mair* at *Lintoun*, I not being returned from *Newcastle*, nor was there any other of the members in the place, and desired he might have an opportunity to converse with him an hour, or so, after dinner, as to what difference there seemed to be between him and the presbytery, to which Mr. *Mair* signified his willingness, provided any of the members were come up, which he inclined, seeing they were equally concerned with him in the affair. Mr. *Potts* went off to another house, where he rather inclined to dine, and, after a little time, Mr. *Mair* received a short line, by a servant in the inn whither he went, desiring the favour of his company a little; to which Mr. *Mair*, by another, made answer to this purpose, That he did not frequent taverns when he was at home, and no more abroad, than necessity required, so he behaved to excuse him, but, if he wanted to converse with him, he would be at no loss for an opportunity at my house. About the twilight he came to Mr. *Mair*, with whom he found Mr. *Brown* and me; and he was not long with us till he spoke to me, [*aside*] intimating, That he wanted to converse with Mr. *Mair* and me, separate from Mr. *Brown*, in which he was indulged, as the request was small. Waving most of the things we conversed about, farther than as connected with the present affair, Mr. *Potts* said, *He understood we were to have a meeting of presbytery*

‘ *to-morrow*

to-morrow, and wanted to know what we were to do in his case. To which he received for answer, That we were to meet *pro re nata*, but what we were to do, we could not tell till we had made a tryal; but, if he wanted to have any thing done in his affair, he should attend the first ordinary meeting, for our business was already fixed, and that we could do no more than converse extrajudicially with him. He farther added, That he wished we would let all *by-gones be bygones*, and give him some weeks assistance by a preacher, till he returned from *Oxford*, whither he purposed to go, about some private business *. So we told him, with abundance of opennes, That we could not presently grant him the request, seeing the probationers had their appointments elsewhere, till next ordinary meeting in *December* thereafter; and that we had no design to carry matters to an extreme, but, in as much as the presbytery, since his ordination, had in nothing deviate from their former principles and practice, but he had given them just offence, it was proper he should wait on them at first ordinary meeting, to endeavour its removal. This, with what brotherly freedom the Reverend Mr. *Mair* used with him, for his throwing of the dice at *Cornhill*, and some other things he looked upon as blameable in his ministerial walk, is the sum of what past upon *Tuesday*'s night.

On *Wednesday* after sermon, which was done rather I think before as after 12 of the clock, when the members of presbytery had retired to my house, and a commissioner or two from *Kelso*, Mr. *Potts* signified, That there were some of his people who had come with a design to wait upon the presbytery, and we might speak to them; we told them, That our present meeting was not the ordinary meeting of

* This is all the concession that I remember he made in private conversation, which he so much boasts of in page 14. of his *preface and appeal*.

‘ of presbytery, but a meeting *pro re nata*, and that
‘ we could enter on no other business than what we
‘ were restricted to; but, if they had any thing to
‘ do, the proper time was at our first in *December* at
‘ *Dalkeith*. This I remeber to have told them in the
‘ presence of severals, and was overheard in another
‘ room by others. Mr. *Potts* should therefore have
‘ advised better with his memory before he had aver-
‘ red we denied our being a presbytery. The people
‘ from *Kelso* being dismissed, Mr. *Potts* called me a-
‘ side into another room, and expressed himself in
‘ words to this purpose, Seeing that nothing could be
‘ done in his affair, it was needless for him to wait.
‘ I told him, That, for my own part, I thought it was
‘ much so as to that; and if he wanted the present
‘ difference brought to an amicable Issue, he should
‘ not fail in attending the ordinary meeting of presby-
‘ tery; and that his continued absence, which had
‘ been always since his ordination, except two times,
‘ had, in part, increased the difference. He desired
‘ me also to let him know what we were now to do,
‘ which I did, signifying, That the presbytery were to
‘ enter upon two private affairs, and to form a libe-
‘ against him; whereupon he said, He would ne-
‘ ver appear as a pannel at the bar of the presby-
‘ tery, that we might assure ourselves of; and I tol-
‘ him, if he would not appear in this capacity, we
‘ would not decline conversing with him otherways
‘ and so we parted, after his desiring me to write him
‘ the result of our meeting as to his affair, which
‘ promised, and did shortly thereafter perform, so fa-
‘ as I could, because of my promise, otherways
‘ would not have wrote him: But, had he been in my
‘ place, I believe him to be the man who would have
‘ been deficient of so much *English openness*, with
‘ which he supposes himself to be so very liberally endued,
‘ and of which I shall be persuaded also when
‘ proper evidences are shewn.

Moreover, I cannot help observing how little English openness appears in the representation he gives as to matters of fact in the foreaid affair. In page 13 of his *introduction*, he says, *In consequence of the above event, (viz. his not coming to assist at the celebration of the Lord's supper here) I was cited to the presbytery, to answer for my conduct, which I obtemperate at Jedburgh.* It is most certain he received no citation to the meeting *pro re nata* here, which some of his readers are made to believe from his account of things; nor did he ever receive any to this hour *in consequence of that event*, in regard that the presbytery did never as yet cognosce this conduct of the minister and elders at *Jedburgh*; but possibly he means the summons he received to comppear was after that event, which was certainly true, and an observation easy to make, seeing he was not cited till some time in *December*; yet, when he comes to p. 14 of his *protest and appeal*, he seems to have forgot that he had said, *His coming to Jedburgh was to obtemperate the citation he mentions, for, in this place, he speaks of it as a voluntary act of goodness in him, in order to use interest with the presbytery for what he calls conciliating any difference between the presbytery and him, no doubt by the help of his well-accomplished advocates truth and innocence, which, had they been present, would certainly have been prevalent.* In p. 14 of his *introduction*, one would think he is brought to a *nonplus* in what figure he shall expose the members of presbytery, and having, *per accidens*, fallen upon two, he won't fix upon either to manifest the pinch he is brought to. However, for my part, as I cannot give the character of *silly*, I will not that of *subtile*, and so he adds, *As soon as they saw ME, they were in a surprize, and had not the assurance to appear in a presbyterian capacity when I WAS PRESENT.* It is very natural to conceive, that when he looked on himself

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as such a considerable being, he could not but see us as very incon siderable; and seeing this pleaseth him, neither my brethren nor I shall give him much disturbance in the possession of that honour he acquires in so doing. However, he saw nothing he could justly construct so (save that the Reverend Mr. Mair declined an interview with him in the tavern) in regard we happened not to see him on the same eminence he saw himself, and never shunned converse with him, when desired; and had he tarried some few minutes longer than he did, as I earnestly pressed him, we would have had the assurance to appear in a presbyterial capacity, even in *HIS* presence. In p. 15 of his *introduction*, he says, in that original of his to the moderator, which, when I read it, and another I received a few weeks ago from him, or forged by some hand in his name, remarkable for nothing but blunders and banter, brings to my mind the saying of the wise man, Pro. xxvi. 18. *As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows and death, (v. 19) so is the man that deceiveth his his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?* That the members said, *That they were to hold no court;* and in the same page of his *protest*, &c. *We dissembled and cloaked our designs at this season to him, the commissioners, and others, pretending we were no presbytery, &c.* and dismissed them with the sham pretext of our not being a presbytery. This false and calumnious accusation, which, by witnesses of untainted integrity I can prove, deserves no better answer than what *Valerianus Magnus* gave to a *Jesuit* when so dealt with, *mentitur impudenter*, which appears from the above narrative. And this dismission was after they had waited two days upon us. The same answer is due to this, as it is not fact, seeing these he calls commissioners were never seen by us till *Wednesday* after sermon, and I don't think they waited 20 minutes on us; nor was he any longer with us that day than the others,

others, save the time he and I were alone, which would not exceed 15 minutes, and about 4 or 5 hours upon the *Tuesday*'s night; if he means he staid so long in the town, this is equally remote from the truth, being little more than 24 hours, having come about 12 o' clock on *Tuesday*, and went off about the same time on *Wednesday*; and who hath he to blame for his coming upon *Tuesday* to meet with the presbytery? What citation did he receive bearing the 21st of the month to be the day of compearance? Had he come on the first of the month, he would have had twenty to wait ere he found us in a presbyterial capacity. As for our proceeding to libel him in the dark, I hope you'll see, that in this the presbytery trod no unbeaten path: We hindered him of no liberty he craved to vindicate himself, nor would we. He was not indeed present when the libel was formed; but did he ever desire this? and tho' he had, could we have been to blame, in refusing him such an unusual request. What he means by anticipating the woful effects that followed, I know not, unless he means that he was to acknowledge his offence in what was libelled against him; but of this, when in private conversation, we saw not the smaleſt evidence; and altho' on *Tuesday* night, before the Reverend Mr. *Mair* and me, he owned his having thrown dice at *Cornhill*, yet he said what he could to extenuate the same; and had he been as tender about depositions, as he would make the world believe he is, he had abundance of time to prevent it, in regard none of their depositions were taken at *Jedburgh* in *November*, no, nor for several weeks after this, as many of his unwary readers are made to believe, from the obscure way he lays it down.

‘ In the above narratives I have in nothing willingly deviated from truth; and if I have, it is owing

‘ to weakness of memory, and not any wicked de-
‘ sign. I am, with all regard,

Jedburgh, July 6.

R. D. B.

1753,

Yours most affectionately,

JOHN SMITH

I am now come to what may be called the principal reason of your protest, viz. *the forming a libel against you, which, you say, is stuffed with calumnies, contradictions, lies and falsehoods, &c.* page 15. This is a very grievous indictment; if it be true, you cannot be justly blamed for protesting against us. But, I hope, it will appear in the end, that it is as false and unjust as it is in itself severe.

It may be averred, with confidence, that calumny was not the intention of that libel, tho' it be the design of your pamphlet. When the presbytery framed it, they proceeded upon a very open *fama clamosa* of the several facts charged against you, at which they could not connive, without forfeiting the glorious character of the church of *Ephesus*, *Thou canst not beat them that are evil.* In framing the libel, and putting the facts charged against you by common fame to regular trial, we did but our duty to you, and also to ourselves. Had these facts been found false, when regularly examined, the happy event of this process had been the vindication of your character, together with our reconciliation to you; this issue of the trial would not have added more to your honour than to our joy. But if the facts, or at least most of them, be true, your accusation of calumny, lies and falsehoods, will necessarily fall to the ground, and can serve to no other purpose than to stain your essay with the foulest approach.

You propose to answer all the articles of the libel, in the same order wherein they are placed in said libel. You begin your attack upon the libel, by asserting, That the preamble contains a contradiction, bearing in one place, *That all the ministers of the associate synod are bound to maintain presbytery as the only government* ; and, in another part of it, *to maintain presbyterian church-government is censurable*. This, I confess, is such a blunder, that no man of common sense is capable of it. The libel indeed bears, That all the ministers of the associate synod are bound to maintain presbytery as the only government of Christ's house ; and I may add, that he is unworthy of the name of a presbyterian, who thinks or teaches otherwise. But that the libel, (which I have just now before me as in the minutes) adds, *To maintain presbyterian church-government is censurable*, is such an impudent lie, that I am astonished how you had the confidence to publish it to the world. When such falsehoods drop deliberately from your pen, it can be no error to desire you to examine what claim you have to that character given of the saints, Isa. lxiii. 8. *Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so he became their Saviour.*

You very broadly give the lie, to the first article of your libel, viz. *your absenting from most meetings of presbytery, and from all the meetings of synod since your ordination, without any excuse offered for the same.* The proof of this article is taken from the minutes of the presbytery, where you are marked absent from all the meetings of the presbytery but two. You appeal to the letters you sent to the presbytery; who received these letters, excusing your absence, I know not: All the members of presbytery refuse that they received any such letters from you, beside your printed one, dated the 18th of December 1752. which, at best, was *mustard after meat*, being posterior to the date of the libel, which, by this time, was put into your hands; and another one, which contained an excuse for your absence

sence from another presbytery. Can this account of matters falsify that part of your libel?

You confess, that you have not attended the presbytery since June last, (viz. 1752.) the reason of which you tell us is, because, *you could not be sustained as a sitting member.* This excuse is unjust, and also false, seeing no member of a presbyterian court can lose his seat in the court, till he be panneled by a formal libel put into his hands. His excuse therefore is a pitiful shift, and serves only to betray the weakness of its author. But you add, That you excused your absence, some months ago, by a letter to the presbytery: This letter we received not till you were libelled, and therefore it cannot militate against the truth of the libel. Moreover, you are much mistaken in asserting, That your printed letter does excuse your absence: for that letter you signify, That you inclined to have attended the meeting of the presbytery in December last, and some former meetings of presbytery, had you not received a scurrilous libel (as you call it) from the clerk, seeing it was natural to conceive, that you would be considered as a delinquent, and could not be sustained as a sitting member of the court. This conception, Sir, was false, and the birth, viz. your absence from the meetings of presbytery, unnatural. This ought to have been a reason for your attendance upon the presbytery, that, by this means, you might seasonably throw water upon the flame that was kindling against you. So far, therefore, is the pretended excuse of your absence from answering your purpose, that it renders your absence more culpable, and involves you in the additional guilt of a contempt of the orders of the court, to which you vowed to be subject. Neither did you ever attend one meeting of synod, since you were in the office of the ministry: Altho' it be true, that you excused your absence from the first meeting of synod, after your ordination, in a letter to a brother; yet it is no less true, that you cloathed that brother with no commission.

for

son to excuse you to the synod. Neither was there any sincerity in the excuse that you offered, seeing you told three of your brethren in your own house, on the 16th of June 1752. *That the true reason why you had never attended any meeting of the synod, was their violating a minute to your prejudice.* What prejudice they have done you concerning that minute, I have already told you. If they had hurt you in that matter, it was an additional reason for your attendance, that you might obtain a speedy redress of your complaint. This article of your libel is unexceptionably proven, and your trifling replies serve only to add an additional lustre to its proof. Neither are you to think that this is a trifling article. You may learn what judgment you are to form of it, from *R. m. xii. 8. Heb. x. 24, 25.* This voluntary absenting is declared censurable by the famous assembly of Glasgow 1638 *Act, Sess. 23. Act, Sess. 24.* Likewise by the assembly 1647. *Act, Sess. 27.* nor can it fail to deserve it, seeing such a culpable practice pours contempt upon the thrones of judgment, and the assemblies of the house of David; throws every thing into confusion in the house of God, and weakens the hands of fellow-presbyters, who are disposed to be faithful in preserving order in the church.

The second article of the libel accuses you of speaking against our covenants in some of the months of June, July or August last, (viz. 1752.) you complain, that you are not told what covenants you had spoken against. The stile of our covenants, used for the national covenant and solemn league, is so familiar with the Seceders, that it is strange how you could be in any mistake about this matter. Moreover, the preamble of the libel, which is a key to every article libelled, mentions the national covenant and the solemn league expressly, and detects the iniquity of speaking against them; none therefore that have the smallest knowledge of the nature of libels, and are capable

able of comparing the several parts of a preamble and libel together, could reasonably produce this complaint. Had your brethren imagined, that this would be improven as the cause of any quarrel, they would have saved you the trouble of this complaint. Your method of repelling this article deserves particular notice. Say you, *Whatever be your opinion as to these (viz. the national covenant and solemn league) yet, according to the best of your remembrance, this article is also false.* What is your private opinion about them, I know not; but it is certain, that you solemnly professed their binding obligation upon this present age, when you were ordained to the ministry in *August 1751*. If you had a secret opinion about them of a different nature, it affords us another instance of your dissimulation, which, by this time, alas! is become too familiar to you. Though you do not remember you spoke against ~~your~~ covenants, which perhaps is true, how came you to imagine that this article is also false? They are ill skill'd in logicks who will admit of this conclusion. Before we can receive it upon the goodness of your memory, you must assure us, that your memory can lose the remembrance of nothing; a perfection claimed by none of the human species in this mortal state. Then shall we pay all the respect that is due to your perfect memory. Till then we must believe that others have remembered what you have forgotten. It is proven, by the depositions of two unexceptionable witnesses, that, within the time libelled, though you did not condemn what was moral in these covenants, yet you could not approve of their being turned into the form of oaths. Pray, Sir, what could you have spoken more to their prejudice? If they should never have been turned into oaths, what reason can be assigned for this, unless it be that they were bonds of iniquity? If they were really bonds of iniquity, what are we concerned with them? For my own part, I think you have done more to bring them into contempt,

tempt, by this way of expressing your mind about them, than any that ever denied their binding obligation upon the present age.

Neither are you to reckon this article of libel a triffe in its nature, or esteem it a matter of indifference in itself. It has peculiar aggravations in you, who engaged very lately to support their credit. The iniquity therefore of your conduct is declared, *Prov. xx. 25. It is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy, and after vows to make enquiry.* Nor can we be accused of novelty, in making this iniquity a reason of your censure; the assembly 1640. *Act, Seſſ. 1.* declare it censurable.

The third article of your libel contains a charge of latitudinarianism, founded upon what you declared to some elders in your own house, *That you could join with others in the sacrament of the supper, using different gestures at it, such as sitting, standing, kneeling or leaning.* This is also proven by two of the witnesses: Neither do you offer any considerable contradiction to their depositions. You own the substance of what they have sworn relative to these gestures, with the trifling variation of using the word *discumbung* for leaning. What the deponents have sworn, is, at least, better sense than what you acknowledge. You signify, *That though you could take the sacrament of the supper in these different gestures, yet you did not say, that you would do it;* for the sake of offence, you add, *that you would not do it.* I am glad to find, that, in this case, you have a desire not to offend Christ's little ones. I wish you were uniform in this tenderness; had you been equally tender in some other cases, the world would have heard less of your clamour and noise, and you had more accurately pondered the path of your feet. However that be, I must tell you for once, that your particular liberty of conscience to *kneel* at the sacrament of the supper, expressed both by your tongue and pen, is very scandalous, after you solemnly declared

clared your belief of the binding obligation of the national covenant, as explained by the general assembly 1638. to abjure the five articles of *Perth*, of which kneeling at the sacrament of the supper is one; as also, you vowed to prosecute the ends of this covenant in the above sense: Wherefore, it is no less than perjury in you, to retain a liberty of conscience to kneel at the sacrament, because, by a vow, you have solemnly renounced this liberty. But you add, *Mult you be excommunicated, if you should take the sacrament in a posture different from us.* Then you signify, that you should be excommunicated with excellent company, even the most of the protestant churches abroad. What further censure the presbytery shall inflict upon you, I know not; but this is certain, that you may be excommunicated for this, as well as your other irregularities, without the good company of such churches to keep you in countenance. Were you abroad at *Geneva*, or among the protestants in *France*, you might be excused for communicating in the standing posture with them, partly because they never attained to the use of the table posture since the reformation, and partly because the sacrament of the passover was originally observed standing; though I ingenuously confess, I could not indulge you in this liberty in *Holland*, *Britain* or *Ireland*, where the table-posture in the ordinance of the supper has obtained, with all protestants, besides episcopals, in imitation of the primitive institution by Christ, who, with his apostles, did use it in the table-gesture, and whose example ought with us to have the force of a precept. It is therefore your liberty to kneel at this sacrament, that is the principal part of our quarrel with you; partly, because you hereby trample upon your solemn vows; partly also, because kneeling at the sacrament, has, by the best writers among our reformers, been interpreted idolatry, and a gross breach of the second commandment. Consult Mr. *Rutherford's* *Latin* *use to*

Latin letter to Mr. Ephraim Melvil, and Gillespie's miscellany questions, where you will find this point established, with such strength of argument, as you will never be able to overthrow. You have no reason to boast of the practice of the *Lutheran* churches in kneeling, the reason of that gesture with them is, their doctrine of *consubstantiation*, which, if not so monstrous in its nature as *transubstantiation*, yet labours under the disadvantage of being more unintelligible. I wish you had informed the world from what history you learned, that the *Lutheran* churches, in three different synods, condemned the posture of *sitting*, not only because the *Arians* used it, which indeed is true, but because they were the first who introduced *sitting* in their church, contrary to the practice of all the evangelical churches in *Europe*. This assertion is so ridiculous and absurd, and church-history gives such ample documents, that no posture at the sacrament was used beside *sitting*, through several centuries in the Christian church after its first erection, that I cannot believe any synod of learned men could be capable of such a blunder in history, for the sake of a favourite notion. Till you produce sufficient authority, I must be allowed to doubt of its truth. When you shall prove it, and do this justice to your own character, such an obvious mistake will represent these synods in a pitiful light: However that be, it is no secret in the world, that kneeling was first introduced into the church about the 13th century, after the monstrous figment of *transubstantiation* was established. It was but natural to the popish church to *kneel*, that they might adore the body and blood of Christ, really present in the supper: It is for that reason, that the church of *Scotland*, in her best times, have esteemed this *kneeling* gesture *idolatry*; your conscience must therefore be very wide, when you proclaim your liberty to commit *idolatry*. Though some charity is due to the *Lutheran* churches, who never were enlightened

ened in this point of truth, what can be offered as an apology for you, who have solemnly abjur'd this piece of detestable idolatry ?

The liberty you assume to yourself in kneeling, and allow to others, so opposite to the primitive institution of the supper, and the primitive practice of the churches of Christ, as likewise so contrary to the views of the strictest protestants since the reformation, is an instance of latitudinarianism, that is of a very gross and scandalous nature in itself, but still more so in you, who solemnly renounced the five articles of *Perth*. If you shall be able to free your self from the guilt of perjury by this conduct, the strength of your invention cannot be sufficiently praised. In the mean time, the presbytery cannot be accused of rigour, in making this article of libel so clearly proven a reason of the censure they have passed against you.

I was surprised to find you throwing calumny upon the *Scotish* nation, to defend your own liberty in kneeling : Lest I should appear to injure you by this assertion, your own words may be quoted, page 19. ‘ According to my brethren’s law and rule of procedure with me, they would have arraign’d and condemned most of the inhabitants in *Scotland*, because they could have joined in the late rebellion, as having many opportunities and temptations thereto, yet they would not.’ What is the meaning of their words, if it be not that the most of the people in *Scotland* are of *Jacobite* principles, and were restrained from rising with others in the late rebellion, not by conscience, or disaffection, to the pretender’s interest, which, according to you, can be no other than the fear of the vengeance of the government, the risquins of their substance, or a dastardly cowardice that seized their spirits ? If these, and not conscience, were the only restraints of the *Scots* nation from rebellion, for my part, I do not think that the government has any reason to think us sufficiently loyal, but have

the reason in the world to judge us a *Jacobite* race, who will not fail to rebel, so soon as a fit opportunity presents it self unto us. It is certain, that not a few, in some of the northern counties in *Scotland*, are strongly attached to a popish pretender's claim to the throne of *Britain*, partly through the influence of their *Highland* chiefs, and partly through the cunning craft of popish missionary priests, and episcopal clergy, who, for a long time, have been very successful in diffusing *Jacobite* principles in these places. It is no secret also, that almost the whole body of episcopals in the southern counties in this nation are notorious *Jacobites*, though there are some few of that persuasion who are sufficiently loyal. But I can appeal to all your judicious readers, if it be fact, that the body of this nation could have risen in the late rebellion; the body of this nation are of presbyterian principles, and till they renounce these principles, and give up with the presbyterian name, they must, by their principles be subject to the present government, not for wrath but conscience sake; as also, for the same reason, be hearty enemies to the claims of a popish pretender. I must wonder the less that your slandering talent is so largely displayed in casting odious slurs upon our names, when our nation comes in so unjustly for its share of reproach, of which you are so very liberal, that it cannot be amiss to put you in mind, that, if any man seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue (and consequently his pen) his religion is vain.

You seem to shew a mighty fondness of telling your reader, that *England* is your native country; and though I love not to make reprisals upon your nation, for the injustice you have done to mine; yet, to convince you that *England* needs not throw a stone at *Scotland* for disloyal principles, till it be freer of the same crime, I shall entertain you with a passage from a celebrated author called the *Old Whig*, vol. i. p. 5, 6. ' But how many visible symptoms are there of dangers,

the nation (*viz. England*) is on all hands alarmed with the growth of popery—Authentick accounts from the north and west of *England*, and from the principality of *Wales*, speak of large numbers of converts, of the increase of mass-houses, the publick appearance of popish priests, and of the most open resort to their places of worship. In the two great cities of *London* and *Westminster*, they enter into publick conferences and disputes in favour of popery, privately spread among the people catechisms, for the reception of converts, books of devotion, and scandalous accounts of the reformed religion, and of those illustrious and worthy men who were the glorious instruments of providence, in planting and establishing it in this, and other nations of *Europe*. The number of priests about this city, is said, by a moderate computation, to be no less than ten thousand ; and the number of the priests in the kingdom to amount to 600,000. This author of character has given you a goodly number of your nation, who must be conscientious *Jacobites*; and, if you add to them all your high-church party, who are distinguished, by their zeal for the interest of a popish pretender, and of whom there are such swarms in *England*, that, if my information be not bad, will amount to twice the number of *Roman* catholicks. Judge then, Sir, if I can be justly blamed for telling you, that *Scotland* may vie with *England* in the principles of loyalty, and in a zealous attachment to the present government. I rejoice not in the above history of your nation ; sorry am I that there is a *Jacobite* in *Britain* : Yet, when you publish a calumny against my country, I may be pardoned for mortifying your seeming pride in *yours*, by letting you see what another has written about it, who knows more of the state of your nation than you can pretend.

The fourth article of your libel accuses you of deserting your pastoral care of a part of your flock, viz.

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Stitchell congregation. It is proven, by the oaths of the witnesses, that you have not preached at *Stitchell* since October last. In your *Defence*, p. 21. you do not deny this fact, therefore the witnesses cannot be blamed for doing you an injury. Before I consider your defence, it is necessary to remind you, that the articles of union between the people of *Stitchell* and *Kelso* were settled by the presbytery; that you accepted of the call from *Stitchell*, and the adherence to said call from *Kelso*, upon the footing of this settlement. By this deed of settlement, worship was appointed to be two *Sabbaths* at *Stitchell*, and one at *Kelso* alternately: Seeing therefore you had given over preaching at *Stitchell* altogether, it must necessarily follow, that you have deserted the people of *Stitchell*, broke through the articles upon which they called you, and submitted to your ministry; by which means you have miserably deceived, and grossly abused them, betraying the trust they reposed in you. I find indeed, you deny the charge of a *deserter*, unless we hold a soldier guilty of *desertion*, who does not keep his tent fixed in the same spot of ground winter and summer, though at the same time he is in the camp, and not going over to the enemy's side, but making *stedfast resistance* unto them. The above case of a soldier will contribute little to your service, and cannot be justly applied to you; it is no secret, that, before you had deserted your station at *Stitchell*, you had openly gone over to the enemy's side, and publickly warred against your fellow-soldiers, amongst whom you had enlisted yourself: Moreover, a soldier is not at liberty to alter the station of his tent in a camp without the leave of his commanding-officer, lest he draw upon himself the just punishment of military discipline for his crime; were not this the case in a military camp, no order could be preserved in it: Neither could you, at your own hand, desert your camp at *Stitchell* in the winter season, for the sake of better accomodation at *Kelso*, till

till the presbytery had exeeemed you from that yoke which you had put upon your own neck, without any exception of the winter season. If you found this yoke grievous to be born, why did you not remonstrate to the presbytery, and entreat them to ease you of such an intolerable burden? In the doing hereof you would have acted like a *presbyterian*, and paid some regard to that comely order which ought to be observed in the house of God; but your doing of this at your own hand, has involved you in the crime of trampling upon the authority of the presbytery, to which you vowed subjection, and you have acted like one in a state of independency upon any court under heaven, have made your own will the law of your conduct, which is no good quality in a bishop. But acts of settlement, contracts, engagements, and vow of subjection must all pass with you for nothing, when they interfere with your own humour, or clash in the least with your own schemes, to which, in this matter, you have paid greater devotion than to the dictates of a tender conscience. Farther, if you were desirous of winter-quarters, you needed not retire to *Kelso* for them, but to *Stitchell* meeting-house, which is capable of containing a numerous congregation. What can therefore be more evident than your scandalous desertion of a part of your flock, by quittin the principal station where you were appointed to exercise your ministry on the Lord's day, and have at violated the contract into which you did enter with the people of *Stitchell*, as also fixed your station at *Kelso*, where the people on the north side of *Stitchell* congregation were not capable to attend you? Wherefore you have a rich title to the punishment due to deserters of the posts assigned them. You signifiest that you are willing to exercise all the parts of your ministry among your flock; but this you have not done in the way you engaged by the acceptance of their call, upon the footing of the presbytery's

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which fixed the claims between *Stitchell* and *Kelso*, with reference to your ministry each Sabbath. You add a limitation, provided they would act as sheep, and be subject to your ministry. Had you, Sir, acted like a faithful shepherd, and fulfilled your ordination-vows, the sheep had spared you the trouble of this complaint: Never did one of them reject your labours, till you began to build what you vowed to destroy, and to destroy what you engaged to build; nor did one of them withdraw from you, till you began to lead them aside from the path of their duty, and attempted to make them stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths in a way not cast up.

As your desertion of your flock, by quitting your station at *Stitchell*, is sufficiently instructed by what is offered above; as your defence is feeble, and not to the purpose; and, as you confess yourself worthy of censure, if desertion can be proven against you; I need not tarry to prove that the above article of libel, as it is proven, renders you worthy of censure.

The fifth article of libel arraigns you as guilty of speaking to the discredit of the whole testimony, in one of the months of June, July, or August: But you complain, that you are not told the year also. Had you been a minister two or three years, your complaint had been just, and the want of the year had been a material omission; but, if you remember that you had been but one *June*, one *July*, and one compleat *August*, a minister, when that libel was put into your hands (the *August* 1751. being far advanced before your ordination) this objection is very frivolous. Suppose one to come to a place in this nation from *Jamaica*, where he had been born, and lived till he came to this country, and before a year is over after his arrival, he is libelled for some atrocious crime, it is not needful in his case, to specify the year when he committed his crime, it is sufficient to mention the month, or months, because the iniquity for

for which he is arraigned must necessarily be confined to the year of his dwelling in the country. The case is exactly similar to yours, we had but one year of these compleat months of your ministry to go upon, the mention of the year therefore, in which you were guilty of the alledged scandal, was superfluous, or, at least, unnecessary, seeing you were not liable to a mistake, but for the sake of a cavil, of which I think it not strange you should be fond, when better defences are wanting. You refuse, page 21. I hat you spoke to the discredit of the whole of the testimony, and add, that you would not dare to do this, with respect to the Turk's Alcoran, while this one divine truth is in it, the profession of the being of a God. Surprising! Does the truth of the divine existence, or any other Truths in the Alcoran, restrain you from calling the whole of it one of the vilest impostures that ever appeared among men? If this straiten your conscience, to call it a base forgery, or if you believe the existence of one God upon the testimony of the Alcoran, you will find yourself extreamly puzzled to prove yourself a genuine Christian. Your signifying that there are some truths in the testimony does it no great honour; one that would be disposed to shew his critical talent upon that expression, would necessarily explain it thus, that it contains some few, but not many, truths. This makes not the matter much better than the witnesses have done, who have deponed, That you publickly declared it was stuffed with falsehoods. If stuffed with these, what credit can it deserve? Or what could you have spoken more to the disparagement of it? This conduct, when compared with your late solemn approbation of it in its true scope and design, and with your vow to prosecute it in opposition to every thing inconsistent therewith, is another instance of your violating your ordination-vows; as also of such monstrous disimulation, as may put every candid Christian to the blush. If such a complicated immorality, attended with aw-

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nal apostasy, be not worthy of church-censure, I am at a loss to know what shall render people the object of ecclesiastical discipline.

The sixth article of libel bears, *That you have been guilty of flandering the ministers of this presbytery, and their brethren in connection with them, accusing them of making the burgess-oath materially a term of communion.* This I must also tell you is proven, by the concurring depositions of a competent number of witnesses. You refuse the charge of slander, by telling us, page 22. *That you have made it your principle to be very tender with respect to any man's character, and more especially ministers, &c.* Let them believe this who can, I may appeal to all your judicious readers, if this will believe for them. You add, in the same page, *That this instance of slander is misrepresented, in regard you said, That we had made the affair relative to the burgess-oath materially a term of communion: This distinction between making the burgess-oath, and making the affair relative to the burgess-oath a term of communion, is so subtle and nice, that it would take a very metaphysical head to explain it.* But what evidence do you offer to shew that we have made the affair relative to the burgess-oath materially a term of communion? Nothing; but it is so clear, that it needs no proof, seeing all that are acquainted with the state of the secession know it. I might tell you, in your own file, that all who understand the state of the secession know the contrary, and cannot fail to be surprised at your confidence in venting such a glaring falsehood.

Though the former articles of libel, clearly proven against you, be relevant to infer censure, yet this article of slander, which is so contrary to the divine law, *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law,* James v. 11. may also serve to encrease your title to it, and

and render you worthy of the churche's red, which is intended for the chastisement of her scandalous children. However much you may scoff at such usage, yet, if our conduct be justified by the unerring oracles, and the discipline of the church of Scotland, the discharge of our duty may yield peace to our spirits, whatever be the unhallowed effects of it with reference to you.

The next article of your libel, *viz.* *That you have endeavoured to draw your people into a connection with you, as secluded from your brethren, is not proven.* You ask, by what sentence were you secluded from us till November 22. 1752. when the libel was drawn up against you at Jedburgh? By no sentence were you secluded from us till then, but you cannot blame us for the use of that term, because we heard you had used it when conversing with your elders, asking them if they were willing to continue with you, now when secluded from your brethren? Wherefore, Sir, you must blame yourself and not your brethren for that term, who did not insert that term because it was good sense, but because they were assured it was used by you.

The last article of your libel contains a charge of *you playing at the dice, on some or other of the days of July or August, when at Cornhill.* But you signify, that your being *alibi* is sufficient to repel this charge. This article is not proven, as the witnesses knew nothing but a *fama clamosa* about it: And as it is not proven, so it is not made a reason of your censure: But it is certain, that, in one of the months named, or the September following, when at Cornhill drinking the mineral water there, you confessed this fact to the Reverend Messrs. *Mair and Smith*; men, whose integrity the world never suspected, and whose testimony has the happiness of meeting with credit in all places where they are known. Moreover, you suffer much by common fame, if you did not lose considerably by that di-

ersion. This, I find, you call a *trifling article*; if this be just, then it must follow, that the diversions of the cards and dice are such trifling things, as not to deserve the notice of any ecclesiastick court. In this roundly differ from you. In both these diversions there is lottery; but the use of lots is an ordinance of God, appointed for the same end, that an oath is intended, *viz. to put an end to all strife*. Wherefore, the ordinance of lots, like that of swearing, is never to be used without the greatest solemnity and religious reverence of God, seeing by them, as well as by an oath, we make a solemn appeal to him to determine in these matters that are above the abilities of men to decide. This is so evident from the scripture instances of the use of lots, in the cases of *Achan, Saul, Jonah and Matthias*, that I need not carry to illustrate this truth. As they are to be used with a becoming reverence of God, so must they be succeeded by prayer, *Acts i. 4, 26*. In what light then can we view the common diversions of cards and dice, but as profane and presumptuous appeals to the Almighty, attended with an impious and daring corruption of his ordinance of lots, to the worst of purposes, even the gratification of men's wanton andordinate fancies? Neither can these diversions be free from the awful iniquity of tempting the holy One of *Israel*. It is for this reason, that the irreverend use of lots is mentioned in our *Larger Catechism*, as one of the sins forbidden in the third commandment. You may consult the judicious Mr. *Durham's* treatise on the *Ten Commandments*, where you will find, in his exposition of the third commandment, the monstrous nature of these diversions, so clearly and nervously exposed in their odious light, as may, through the Lord's blessing, restrain you from returning to such abominations, which are a scandal to one in your office, and disqualify you to reclaim others from this gross immorality, which has always been one of the

distinguishing marks of rakes in this country, and of persons otherways loose in their morals. It is us likeways one of these sins for which the strictest ministers in Scotland always debarred persons from the Lord's table. Neither has the church of Scotland been wanting in her discipline against it; see *Act of Assembly 1596. Sess. 7.* where her sense of that sin, and the way it ought to be censured in ministers, is presented to your view; which you may read with care, and blush at your own scandalous step, if you, like some others, look not upon it as an old *Almanack* now out of date.

Thus have I followed you through all the articles of your libel; the first six, which are clearly proven, do justly intitle you to censure: Your evasive defences are pitiful and mean; such as they are, I hope they are sufficiently answered, and the weakness of them fully exposed. The two last are indeed not proven, but the last of the two is true, by your own confession to two of our brethren, tho' judicial evidence of its truth was wanting. Sorry am I, that one in the sacred function of the ministry, who ought to be exemplary in his life, should plunge himself into any vice, that is not only a reproach to his office, but also to the Christian profession.

I must not now pass by an instance of your calumny, of a most singular nature, page 22. where you cannot content yourself with staining our names, by laying things to our charge that we know not; but you also accuse us of such abominations as are not to be named, alledging, *That you could detect something in the seceding ministers, the like whereof you was never witness unto amongst any sect of men; but, as it might hurt that which is more tender than us, namely religion, you will let it rest dormant till the great day of discoveries.* Here the reader is left at liberty to imagine us guilty of whatever his wanton fancy may suggest, drunkenness, swearing, adultery, sodomy, incest, atheism, or any thing else he pleases.

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and had the devil guided your pen, nothing more injurious to our names, or more pernicious to the credit of religion could have dropped from it, as this vague and nameless slander, which you so impudently cast upon us. I blush at your confidence, when you pretend a regard to religion, in this odious treatment of the characters of men. I may ask you, Sir, if we been guilty of any secret abomination to which you have been privy? Why did you not secretly reprove, and some endeavour to reclaim us from it? Your duty as a minister, and your connection with us as a brother, tied you to this friendly office: *Lev. xix. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* *Matth. xviii. 15. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell his fault between thee and them both alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* Why have you, for our sakes, trampled upon these laws of heaven as obsolete statutes, which are below your notice? But whatever secret iniquities we are guilty of, they can read your book with little judgment, who do not see that you are a man of no conscience, who tell us, once and again in your book, but your willingness to hold communion with us, whom you not only traduce as liars, juglers, and persons whose morals are not fair; but likeways, as guilty of secret and nameless abominations. What sober Christian can hold communion with such persons, without forfeiting all regard to conscience, and the dictates of the divine law, which commands us to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly? I am sorry, that have reason to tell you, that every unprejudiced reader of your pamphlet must see, that, in the matter of this nameless slander, you have acted more like a faithful disciple of the accuser of the brethren, than a genuine disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus. After all, I must ask you, what secret immorality can you fix upon us? produce it, if it be in your power, we dread nothing

nothing from the discovery: Unless you shall grant this reasonable demand, I crave that you be held as a scandalous slanderer in the eye of the world.

How came you to protest against us as the suppressors of prayer and conference, in order to the healing of dissentions betwixt us, *page 24.* The evidence of this charge is contained in your printed letter. This accusation, if it serve any purpose at all, tends to expose us as so profane, that we hated the duty of prayer; and so weak, that we durst not converse with you. But the true reasons of our not compliance with that part of your request, are these following: We had little reason to think, that you were in earnest in seeking either prayer or conference with us, seeing it was with the utmost difficulty, and repeated refusals, that three of us could obtain an conversation with you at your own house, on the 16th of June 1752. concerning your conduct with respect to *Jedburgh* communion. Again, the place where you demanded it, gave us little reason to think, that you were very keen of obtaining it, *viz.* at your own house; a very extraordinary demand for one, that was cited as a pannel to appear before the presbytery. Had you been very desirous of either prayer or conference with us, you would have met with us at the presbytery, that, in the intervals of our meeting, we might have prayed and conferred together; had we in that case, refused either prayer or conference with you, there might have been some cause of complaint against our conduct, as full of rigor and cruelty, and destitute of that tender care that we ought to exercise towards one another. But I must add, That the nature of your letter prevented our compliance with your request; in it you tell us, you had something to propose about terms of communion, which, you hoped, would satisfy. But, pray Sir, what was the purpose? Though your terms of communion be very wide, and also very offensive, yet terms

communion were not the immediate question betwixt you and us. Had you wrote us, that you agreed with us about terms of communion, our quarrel with you, stated in the libel, had still subsisted, neither could we have dropped a prosecution of you, till we had received satisfaction for the several offensive articles contained in it. Wherefore, your talk about terms of communion did not affect your cause, nor the libel which you had received, and which the presbytery found you had poured such contempt upon, as not to acknowlege that you received it. This was but small encouragement to members of the presbytery to ride long fatiguing journeys, and desert their weekly employment among their flocks, to pray and confer with you, when there is not so much as one article of the offence, we had justly conceived, noticed in your letter, but terms of communion only, which were foreign to the libel. Let the world therefore judge, if we can be justly charged with suppressing prayer and conference.

As I am again led back to your printed letter to the presbytery, in the introduction it is not amiss to observe a lame testimony you give of your candour, when you signify, in that missive, that you are for peace, and hope that we will not say we are for war. We can, Sir, believe you are for peace, if this be granted upon your own terms. Who is the man that will declare himself for war, if he be allowed to settle the articles of peace according to his own mind? But I may ask you, Who broke the peace betwixt you and us? Did we hatch any novelty, from the time that the articles of peace were settled betwixt us, to give you any cause of uneasiness? This you cannot pretend in your own defence. Moreover, did you not turn aside into a new path, after you had engaged to keep the common beaten way, wherein we had long walked? It looks therefore with a very bad grace in you, to pretend that you are for peace, after you

you have violated the articles of peace, with which you formerly professed your satisfaction. When your letter came to our hands, we knew you too well, to imagine that we could have any peace with you, unless we danced to your new pipe, and treacherously trampled upon all the solemn ties we are under to cleave to the covenanted reformation of these lands, and to a testimony against the backslidings from it, both in former and present times. Peace with you we are not willing to buy at this expence : Neither can we believe that you are for peace, till we be so infatuated as to esteem the breakers of peace, *peaceable*, and the keepers of it *contentious*.

Your next reason of protesting against us, is our taking the depositions of witnesses against you, while you were not present to object against any of them ; not having been cited three several times, according to the rules of this church, but only once, while you offered an excuse for your absence from the presbytery. It is true, Sir, that you were but once cited ; but where did you learn, that a triple citation is necessary according to the rules of this church, when a libel is given with a citation ? I challenge you to produce that rule of this church, if it be in your power. If you can shew it, the age will be indebted to you for a new discovery. I find it is a very common rule in the church, that when a libel is given with a citation, and the person libelled does not answer his citation, he should have a second citation appointed him, which, if he refuse to answer, he should be held as confessed, with respect to the articles libelled against him. This, I confess, would have been the best way of serving you. It is altogether false, that your letter bears any excuse from that meeting of presbytery which you were cited to attend. I can appeal to all that ever read that letter, if one colour of excuse be offered for your absence. You try, indeed, to excuse your absence from some former meetings,

which meetings, with Mr. Brown's letter, which is so far from being relevant, that the said letter was an additional reason for your attendance, and renders your absence the more culpable. I find likewise, in the form of process, That the person cited, and libelled, may be present, if he pleases, when the witnesses are examined ; But where is the law of this church that condemns the examination of witnesses, in the absence of the pannel, after he has got fair warning to attend ? When no libel is given to a delinquent, he must be thrice cited before a court can proceed to the censure of him. Did not the general assembly proceed against the eight brethren upon a single citation, attended with a libel, in the year 1740 ? Yea, did not our separating brethren proceed to the examination of witnesses in our absence, after a single citation and libel put into our hands ? Although we condemn the rigour of the assembly in censuring the brethren, not for iniquity, but their duty ; as also the unaccountable rigour of our separating brethren, in pretending to censure us, over whom they had no power, as I have shewed in a pamphlet, called, *The new Constitution unmasked* ; which no man, of presbyterian principles, can pretend to answer ; yet we never complained of their examining witnesses in our absence. You extoll the lenity of Mr. Gib, and his antiburgess presbyters, as you call them, for citing you thrice ; but permit me to tell you, that if these brethren had honoured you with a libel, they had saved themselves the trouble of that labour, and had reckoned a single citation sufficient for you. Your clamour, therefore, is founded upon your ignorance, and tends to no other purpose than to expose your weakness. How vain is it for you then to pretend, elsewhere, that we stole a march against you ? This charge we absolutely refuse, we took a march against you, which we reckon'd our duty, but scorn the imputation of stealing one, seeing you got, in the kirkstile,

stile, fair warning, and therefore ought to have attended for your interest. Moreover, equity itself does justify this form of procedure. What an intolerable drudgery would it be for poor labouring men to travel twenty miles, or upwards, and attend three different meetings of our courts, before we could judicially admit them as witnesses, in the cause of a delinquent? Would it not expose them to the ridicule of pannels, who, like you, would sit at home till you received the third citation, if it were for no other end but to distress the men that were to be received as evidences against them? Would not this be the occasion also of most tedious processes in every case, where the scandal required the smallest proof?

One would be tempted to think you had been dreaming, when you forgot yourself so far, as to protest against us in the same page, because we allowed persons to depone in your cause, who, you are afraid could not be duly purged of malice, ill-will, reward or view of reward. This is heart-judging in the most glaring manner, wherein you have stretched yourself too far beyond your measure, and presumptuously arrogated to yourself the work of an all-seeing God, whose sole province it is to search the hearts, and try the reins of the children of men. You should have remembered the advice of Christ, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, before you had impiously commenced the judge of the hearts of men. The witnesses whom you have the hardines to judge, are men of untainted characters, and, in their station, *men of good report*, who were also purged in common form of malice, partial council, and all undue influence whatsoever. I love not to awaken the resentment of these honest men; but they could not be much blamed, if they should cause you suffer penance on a pillory, for this broad hint of their involving themselves in the sin of perjury for your sake. If you dreaded danger from these men, why did you not attend the presby-

ye at liberty to offer your exceptions against them? Some
itself grand thing might have been expected to support the
an impledged perjury of the witnesses. You begin fair,
abouy saying, some of them soon shewed themselves par-
nd aties in the dispute betwixt us and you. This is some-
ore wthing, if well supported. But how do you prove it?
cause say you, *By their conduct at Jedburgh.* What was
to the their conduct there, if it was not their communicat-
homeing at the sacrament? Was this a party-exercise?
for nuf you declined your duty there, must they be parties
be re because they did not dance to your new pipe. Your
his basecond medium, to evidence their perjury, is as strange
ever as the former, *viz. You had a claim upon them for your*
oof? Salary, which they have not paid up to this day. What
been then? Does debt disqualify one to be a witness?
pro Or, must one be perjured, if he swear to the truth of
ow fact, against one to whom he is indebted? Whe-
fraind ther your claim for your salary was good, I know not,
ward but you have the honour to be the first, that ever car-
mo ried seceders to a court for your slipend. In the mean
urself time, had you served these people according to con-
tract, you had not wanted your wages. It was but
God pitiful and low in you, to entertain the publick with
the story of your salary, which, perhaps, may tempt
some to think, you are greedy of filthy lucre, which is
ye no good character of a bishop.

Your last reason of protest, may be expected to be of a piece with the former ones, that are already discarded, viz. That we, at a late meeting of presbytery at Linton, did most irregularly, and disorderly, proceed to appoint some of our number, to come and preach in your congregation; and this we did, as you are credibly informed, without being properly a presbytery, inasmuch as there was not one ruling elder present at this clergy-court, page 25, 26. It is true Sir, that we had a meeting of presbytery at Linton, in February last, at which not one ruling elder was present, where we found the first six articles of your libel clearly proven;

where also, we appointed a probationer to preach ^{too} at *Stitchell*. You should not have stretched your narrative beyond the limits of truth, to say, that we appointed some of our number to preach in your congregation, seeing *one* can never make *some*; but this, perhaps, is the most pardonable blunder in your book. The reason that no elders attended that meeting is no secret, *viz.* the most tempestuous day that happened last winter, when people could not travel but at the peril of their lives. Your clamour against us for acting in a presbyterial capacity, and your invidious calling us *no presbyterians*, while you insinuate, that *we are leading poor people insensibly to a medley government, a compound of the popish and prelatical hierarchy*, page 33. serve only to discover your shameful ignorance. Who does not know, that presbyteries have always constituted and done their business, when no elders did attend them? *Must* all these ministers have forfeited the name of presbyterians for this reason? Or, must they be lampooned, as guilty of leading the people to subject themselves to a *medley government of the popish and prelatical hierarchy*? It is sufficient for presbyteries, at their meetings, to acknowledge the elders power to sit and judge with them, by marking them absent, who were chosen by their respective sessions to attend these meetings. This we did at *Linton*, according to our received principles and constant practice, when elders happen to be absent. I am sorry to find you *so ignorant*, as not to be capable of making a distinction between a presbytery held without elders, and one held at the expence of their power, impugning their right and power to be equal judges with ministers of every cause that comes before them; we did the former at *Linton*, but absolutely refuse the latter. According to all the forms of the church of *Scotland*, the business of the presbytery fell into our hands, who were present at said meeting; and we behaved to proceed

preach proceed in it in the same way, as if no members had
ur names wanting. Though our number was small, we had
we appear scripture quorum of *two or three*, and therefore
ur considerable reason to expect the benefit of the scripture pro-
t this cause; *I will be in the midst of them and will bless them.*
in you what is above, will justify our power to act. But you
meet protest likewise against our acting irregularly, in ap-
lay that *intending preaching in your congregation, while the process*
t transwixt you and us was depending, and had never been
r called by you before the synod. Had we delayed to ap-
paci- point preaching at *Stitchell*, till you had tabled the
erians, use before the synod, perhaps we had delayed the
people appointment of sermon there for seven years to come.
popish What was then to become of a deserted people, from
disco- whom you had treacherously withdrawn your ministe-
know, ral labours upon the Lord's day? It is true, the
dom process was depending, but when the presbytery ju-
Mun- dicially found, that you had left your pulpit vacant,
resby. and the *Stitchell* people without a shepherd, while the
lam. poor people were crying for the bread of life from
abjects, we could not be so cruel as deny them that favour.
d pre- y this desertion you gave up with them, and left them
es, at shift for themselves: Was it irregular for the people
ver to apply for sermon, or for us to give it? Had we,
present, however, been very keen of censure, and not so slow
ttend- in finishing your process, we might have saved you
ng to the trouble of this complaint. But *this is your thanks*
when for our lenity.

I have now weighed all your reasons of protest (I
ope) in the even balance of scripture and reason,
and do not now blush to affirm, That they are *light and*
wanting. Some are evidently so at first view to every ju-
dicious reader. Others of them that appear more weighty,
those, who know not the true state of the question,
when they are unmasked, and the fraud and falsehood
you have mixed with them detected, they *evaporate*
into *smoke, and are lighter than a feather.*

Not contented with your protest, you must all appeal to any well regulate and right constitute court the protestant reformed churches, to whom you submit the premisses, and crave that this your protest may be recorded, in futuram rei memoriam. This extraordinary appeal and demand, is a flight worthy of a man in the rove of a fever, and serves only to display your arrogant conceit of your title to such particular notice and respect from the protestant churches. You might have spared yourself the trouble of this high claim from any of them; none of their courts, whether right or wrong constitute, will do you the honour to record your protest in their minutes, the fame of which must entirely perish, for any thing they will record themselves obliged to do to preserve it from the fate of oblivion, which indeed, this monstrous child of an irregular brain, so richly deserves.

You give a very ample proof of your high esteem of some of your reasons of protestation, when you repeat some of them as reasons of your appeal to men of reason and religion. You cannot expect that I should repeat my answers also. These which are already answered, when briefly examined, will do very little service in the judgment of these men to whom you appeal your cause for a favourable decision.

You appeal to all men of reason and religion, Whether or not it is reasonable or religious, to seclude one of our communion, because he declares he could have communion with some other ministers of Christ and Christians in the churches of Christ, besides these called Separates, page 27. Men of these characters will hear both parties before they judge in the present question. Your appeal in the kirk-style is *mala appellatum*, or, in other words, an appeal unjustly stated. Whoever heard of disclaiming communion with the foreign protestant churches, which profess the *Calvinistical* scheme, as have not departed from any measure of reformation that ever they attained unto. We abhor the imp

tation of refusing fellowship with them. To represent us therefore to the world as such *rigid Separatists* from all the protestant churches, is another instance of your calumny, of which you have shown yourself to be very capable through the whole of your book. Moreover, the grounds of your seclusion from us are contained in your libel: How could you then deliberately publish a falsehood to the world, as if your freedom to hold communion with others besides us, had been the *only* reason of secluding you from fellowship with us, while it has not a place among our reasons for that conduct? I wish, in the mean time, you had told us with whom you can hold communion; this, I find, you have carefully avoided, perhaps, you durst not do otherways. However that be, I may be pardoned for telling you once for all, that they must shew themselves very untender, and must esteem *deliberate calumnies, and open falsehoods, venial sins*, who are capable of holding communion with you.

But to what purpose do you appeal to *reasonable and religious men*, if it be *generous in us to condemn you, or any man*, under the notion of an *heretick*, for decrying *somethings in our economy, as detrimental to the doctrine of the gospel, particularly our contracted terms of communion*. I wish you had told us wherein our terms of communion were detrimental to the doctrine of the gospel. This, with your usual plainness, you reserve to yourself. The men of *reason and religion*, to whom you appeal this question, before they give sentence in your favours, are to remember, that you made no complaint about our terms of communion till you were ordained, tho' you knew them *then*, as well as *now*; as also, that you vowed to follow no *divisive courses* from us. Then must men of these characters pass sentence against you, as guilty of the want of *candour in concealing your scruples, when it was proper to disclose them, and also of trampling upon your ordination-vows*. Moreover, *these men condemn you for your irregular decrying of our economy*.

Had

Had your conscience been burdened with the narrow terms of our communion; why did you go to a tent, or a pulpit, with this grievance, while you had not regularly presented your grievance before the judicatories, to which you had subjected yourself? No less was necessary to demonstrate yourself a presbyterian. In this way you might have been cured of your uneasiness, by the friendly reasonings of your brethren with you, or you might have convinced them, if they were wrong, and reclaimed them from what was amiss in their ways. But, alas! it was not your design to *reclaim*, but to *revile*, otherways you had dealt more openly with us. Wherefore, the men of *reason* and *religion* must own, that if your conduct, with reference to our œconomy, be consistent with fair dealing and christian integrity, there will rarely be an occasion of repeating the prophet's complaint, *The treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously*.

I find you proceeding in the path of calumny; page 28. where you have the hardines to accuse us of a specious appearance of moderation, in order to strengthen a party, and catch the unwary in our snare; but when we have compassed our end, then, you add, we exclaim against that moderation which we seemed to have. For this odious charge of double dealing, you offer no other documents, but your own performance, and our publick papers. Your book, when duly examined, cannot instruct your accusation. Neither can any evidences of it be drawn from our publick papers. In these we acknowlege the church of Scotland, in her original constitution, viz. in her standards of doctrine and worship, discipline and government, (to use your own phrase) to be a chaste and singular beauty. But what can be thence inferred to our prejudice? Have we not all along been uniform in our sentiments about the present managements of the established judicatories of the church of Scotland? Did we ever retract our indictment against them in the declinature, that they are not right constitute

courts

courts of Christ? These, we own, are grievously corrupted, the backslidings of these judicatories are woefully increased since the first secession, whereby the reasons of secession are multiplied, and the difference betwixt us and them is wider than ever. While therefore we praise the church of *Scotland*, viewed in her standards, as a *singular beauty*, you cannot be surprised, that we should accuse the same church, viewed in her judicatories, as most corrupt, seeing our attachment to her, in the former sense, obliges us to withdraw from her in the latter: Yea, what is the substance of all our complaint that we form against these judicatories, if it be not their multiplied departures from these excellent standards?

You might have spared yourself the trouble of appealing to others, if we be not guilty of ingratitude towards you, who endeavoured to support our sinking cause, as you call it, by preaching for us, both in *England* and *Scotland*, page 30. Were I disposed to serve you with your own measure, I might tell you, That you are a pregnant instance of ingratitude towards these, whom you call *ungrateful*. From the commencement of your studies, till you appeared in the capacity of a preacher, you received more encouragement from the seceding ministers than ever I knew another did meet with; you were also more kindly carressed by private Christians of that denomination, than any other student that ever appeared amongst us. What return you have made for all these favours, I leave to others to judge. I may ask you, for your conviction, Wherein are we in your debt? By no means are we obliged to you for preaching in *England*, seeing you did not promote, but prevent the success of the seceding interest in *England*, as you honestly confess in your *introduction*. Who, by this time, is ignorant, that we are yet less in your debt in *Scotland*, seeing you have stabbed the cause of a testimony, espoused by us, under the fifth rib? I see you make a merit of

continuing in our communion every way to your detriment. If this was to your detriment, it has not been for our advantage. It is a bad bargain when both parties are losers; but you were a fool to continue in connexion with us, if it was not for conscience sake. To render us ungrateful in the eyes of your reader, you add, That now we smite you for the *hainous crime of charity*. We have, indeed, smote you with the sword of censure not for the *hainous crime of charity*, as you endeavour to persuade others; for, if charity be a *crime*, I humbly conceive, that your readers, as well as your brethren, will not scruple to pronounce you *innocent*.

Your rapid torrent of slander is not yet dried up; you proceed, page 51. to load our names with the infamy of the want of candour, calling us men who allow our lips to lie, while you have the boldness to challenge us before a civil court, where you engage to instruct your charge. I leave my brethren to answer this challenge as they think proper; for my own part, I esteem it below my notice; not that I dread the issue of such a tryal before any competent court, nor would I disregard a challenge of this kind from any man of reputed integrity; but I cannot help scorning it, as coming from you, whom I have proven guilty of stuffing your book with impudent lies, and deliberate falsehoods. Sorry am I, Sir, that I have reason to tell you, That you do not appear, by your essay, to have any claim to that pure character of the citizen of Zion, *That he speaketh the truth, as he thinketh it in his heart*. While I view you in no better a light, I am disposed to save you the trouble of compearing before an earthly judge. Had you been under the influence of your compearance before the tribunal of the righteous judge of all the earth, this odious slur on our names had never dropped from your infamous pen.

Reasonable men must be surprised at your ignorance, in appealing to them, if our conduct be not inconsistent

consistent with the laws of nature and nations, because, say you, we acted as judges in an affair, where the nature of the thing did constitute us properly parties? Why you call us parties, in your case, I cannot learn, if it be not because we did libel you. Could this disqualify us to be your judges? Or, could the framing of a libel constitute us parties? Must I talk to you as if you were a child, and inform you, that it is common practice in the church of Scotland, from the Reformation, to this very day, for a presbytery to libel a brother, upon a *fama clamosa*, and also to sustain themselves judges, how far he is guilty of the crimes libelled against him; wherefore, your appeal to the judicious world, upon this score, may well cause them pity your surprising weakness, but cannot prevail upon them to condemn our practice in libelling, and also censuring you, seeing we walked by the foot-steps of the flock, and the approved rules of the church of Scotland, which will stand the test against the low prattling of an ignorant novice in the discipline of the church.

It is yet more astonishing to behold you displaying your ignorance of the constitution of the kingdom of Christ, pages 31 and 32. in appealing to all judicious judges, Whether or not any party of men can assume a power to lay a libel, and serve it against any of the subjects of our sovereign king George, in a consistency with the laws of these lands, while yet the said party of men are looked upon, in the eye of the law, as no legal Court? What the laws of Britain say, in such cases, is neither your concern nor mine, we must be guided by the law of the King of Kings, in the censuring of you; as we have our office from him, we must be directed in the management of it by his laws only. I am sorry that you seem to have forgot, that Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and independent upon the kingdoms of this world. If we have no power to censure you, because we are not a legal court, in the eye of the

law, it must follow, that we also wanted a power to ~~high~~
ordain you to the holy ministry; as likeways, that over
you never was a minister of *Jesus Christ*. You have ~~not~~
not acted very wisely in calling the validity of your ~~and~~
office in question: Moreover, if we be faulty in libel-~~ing~~
ing you, because you are one of king *George's* sub-~~jects~~
jects, the Apostle *Paul* was in the *same transgression*,
for directing the *Corinthian* church to deliver the in-~~cestuous~~
~~icks~~, during the three first centuries of the church,
before *Constantine the great* became the head of the *Roman*
empire, seeing they could not claim the honour of
being legal courts, in the eye of the law of the *em-
pire*. This appeal, therefore, can answer no other
purpose than to discover your ignorance of *Christ's*
kingdom, which is not of this world; and also to
tempt your readers to think that you have renounced
presbyterian principles, and embraced, in their stead,
the Erastian scheme, which acknowledges no superior
in the church but the princes of the earth.

I have now finished an answer to your blundering
essay; nothing in it worthy of my notice, has e-
scaped a reply. Only I was surprised to find you vain
enough to set up for a critick, and you must pardon
me, when I inform you, That you are not yet qua-
lified to appear in that *character*. Some of your
Latin praises will not reconcile with the com-
mon rules of that language, while the multiplied
errors in your own tongue, serve only to display
your ignorance of *English grammar*. Sorry am I that
you have creped out of your *beloved obscurity*, till
you were ripe for appearing in the press with advan-
tage.

Your own folly may convince you of the wisdom
of *Salomon's* advice, *Go not forth hastily to strive, lest
thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy
neigh-*

power to neighbour hath put thee to shame. May the Lord res-
ys, that over you from your apostasy and may he enable you
ou have remember whence you are fallen, that you may repen-
of you and do your first works. I am not your enemy because I
in libel have told you the truth.

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1753.

Wm. HUTTON.

F I N I S,

THE foregoing Letter, having been printed at a
Time when the Author had not Leisure to look
after the Press, the following Errors have inadver-
tently crept into it.

Page 9. l. 17. for ~~having~~ read giving, p. 14. l. 37. for
pernicious r. promiscuous, p. 16. l. 1. dele you, p.
19. l. 18. for more r. Brown, ibid. l. 19. for Brown
r. more, p. 23. l. 27. for 20. r. 21. p. 25. l. 5.
for superior r. equal, p. 33. l. 35. for 752. r. 1752.
p. 42. l. 22. dele and if you, ibid. l. 24. dele and.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ALTHOUGH the AUTHOR OWES no answer to Mr. Potts, with reference to the question about terms of communion, for the reasons offered in the pamphlet, yet, if any judicious persons shall complain of this want, he hereby informs them, That, God willing, he intends to publish a vindication of the seceding brethren, in connection with him, from the unjust accusation of schism, and unreasonable narrowness in the point of communion, wherein he intends such defences of their conduct, as may satisfy all who are conscientious *Presbyterians*, who have not adopted the latitudinarian scheme, a scheme which, if consistently prosecuted, would justify communion with *Jansenists* in the church of *Rome*.

o Mr.
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